

# HANDEL'S GLORIOUS MESSIAH

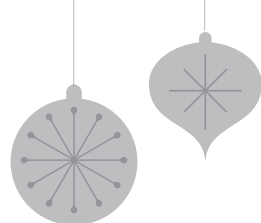
Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025 @ 3 p.m.

Robert Istad, conductor  
 Rabihah Davis Dunn, soprano  
 Randall Scotting, countertenor  
 Martin Bakari, tenor  
 Jarrett Ott, baritone  
 Lori Loftus, harpsichord  
 Pacific Chorale—Robert Istad, Artistic Director  
 Pacific Symphony



Handel's Glorious Messiah is generously sponsored by:  
**Mark Chapin Johnson and Harrason Ann Horowitz**  
**Mark Chapin Johnson Foundation**

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
 Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall



## Part I

Sinfonia  
 Recitative: Comfort ye my people  
 Air: Ev'ry valley shall be exalted  
 Chorus: And the glory of the Lord  
 Recitative: Thus saith the Lord  
 Air: But who may abide the day of his coming?  
 Chorus: And he shall purify  
 Recitative: Behold, a virgin shall conceive  
 Air & Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion  
 Recitative: For behold, darkness shall cover the earth  
 Air: The people that walked in darkness  
 Chorus: For unto us a child is born  
 Pifa ("Pastoral Symphony")  
 Recitative: There were shepherds abiding in the field  
 Recitative: And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them  
 Recitative: And the angel said unto them  
 Recitative: And suddenly there was with the angel  
 Chorus: Glory to God  
 Air: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion  
 Recitative: Then shall the eyes of the blind  
 Air: He shall feed his flock  
 Chorus: His yoke is easy

## —INTERMISSION—

## Part II

Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God  
 Air: He was despised  
 Chorus: Surely he hath borne our griefs  
 Chorus: And with his stripes we are healed  
 Chorus: All we like sheep have gone astray  
 Recitative: All they that see him laugh him to scorn  
 Chorus: He trusted in God  
 Recitative: Thy rebuke hath broken his heart  
 Air: Behold, and see if there be any sorrow  
 Recitative: He was cut off out of the land of the living  
 Air: But thou didst not leave his soul in hell  
 Chorus: Lift up your heads, O ye gates  
 Chorus: The Lord gave the word  
 Air: How beautiful are the feet  
 Chorus: Their sound is gone out  
 Air: Why do the nations so furiously rage together?  
 Chorus: Let us break their bonds asunder  
 Recitative: He that dwelleth in heaven  
 Air: Thou shalt break them  
 Chorus: Hallelujah

## Part III

Air: I know that my redeemer liveth  
 Chorus: Since by man came death  
 Recitative: Behold, I tell you a mystery  
 Air: The trumpet shall sound  
 Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

# ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR

Robert Istad, conductor/artistic director



A GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor who “fashions fluent and sumptuous readings” (*Voice of OC*) with his “phenomenal” artistry (*Los Angeles Times*), was appointed Pacific Chorale’s Artistic Director in 2017. Under his leadership, the chorus continues to expand its reputation

for excellence for delivering fresh, thought-provoking interpretations of beloved masterworks, rarely performed gems, and newly commissioned pieces.

In July 2023, he led Pacific Chorale’s first international tour in seven years, conducting performances at leading venues in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. His artistic impact can be heard on two recent recordings featuring Pacific Chorale, including the 2022 GRAMMY® Award-winning “Mahler’s Eighth Symphony” with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gustavo Dudamel on Deutsche Grammophon (2021), for which he prepared the chorus. It won Best Choral Performance and also garnered a GRAMMY® nomination for Best Engineered Album, Classical. Additionally, Istad conducted the Pacific Chorale’s recording “All Things Common: The Music of Tarik O’Regan” released on Yarlung Records (2020).

He regularly conducts and collaborates with Pacific Symphony, Berkshire Choral International, and Yarlung Records. His extensive credits also include recording for Sony Classical and guest conducting Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Bath Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Tesseræ Baroque, and Freies Landesorchester Bayern.

Istad has prepared choruses for such renowned conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, John Williams, John Mauceri, Keith Lockhart, Nicholas McGegan, Vasily Sinaisky, Sir Andrew Davis, Bramwell Tovey, Carl St.Clair, Eugene Kohn, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, and Robert Moody. An esteemed educator, Istad is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he was recognized as CSUF’s 2016 Outstanding Professor of the Year.

He conducts the University Singers and manages a large graduate conducting program, in addition to teaching courses on conducting and performance practice. Istad, who is on the Executive Board of Directors of Chorus America and serves as Dean of Chorus America’s Conducting Academy, is in demand as guest conductor, lecturer, and clinician.



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Rabihah Davis Dunn, soprano



Rabihah Davis Dunn, Soprano, is praised for her “glowing instrument” (*San Francisco Classical Voice*) and “radiant tone” (*OperaWire*). Equally at home on the operatic stage and in concert settings, she is known throughout the San Francisco Bay Area for her work with Pocket Opera

and oratorio appearances with Masterworks Chorale and the San Francisco Choral Society. In the 2024–25 season, Dunn made her solo debut with the Missoula Symphony in Poulenc’s *Gloria* and Rutter’s *Requiem*.

Additional oratorio highlights include solo appearances in Beethoven’s *Mass in C Major*, *Ein Deutsches Requiem*, and Haydn’s *Nelson Mass* and *Stabat Mater* with the Pro Arte Orchestra of London.

This 2025–26 season, Dunn makes her solo debut with the GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale, performing Poulenc’s *Gloria* and the world premiere of Jocelyn Hagen’s *What the Soul Already Knows*. You will also see her as the soprano soloist in Handel’s *Messiah* with Pacific Symphony in Costa Mesa, CA.

Dunn was a finalist in the London Handel Vocal Competition and a semi-finalist in the Montserrat Caballé International Voice Competition. She holds degrees from the University of Southern California, the University of Michigan, and the Royal Academy of Music.

Randall Scotting, countertenor



Randall Scotting has become a sought-after artist by some of the world’s most esteemed opera houses. In December of 2019 he made a spectacular debut at London’s Royal Opera House as Apollo in Britten’s *Death in Venice*, singing to sold-out audiences at Covent Garden in David McVicar’s acclaimed production.

Scotting then joined the roster of the Metropolitan Opera to cover performances of Handel’s *Agrippina* and returned to the Met in 2022 for performances of *Eurydice* by Matthew Aucoin. In the spring of 2022 he made another impressive debut at the Bayerische Staatsoper singing the role of Michael in a new production of Haas’ micro-tonal opera *Thomas*.

Scotting’s debut solo album with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, was released by Signum Classics in September 2022, entitled *The Crown: Heroic Arias for Senesino*. The recording earned high praise from many reviewers; “Scotting lets loose a ravishing vocalism, deep colours, muscular core...Scotting’s messa da voce is mesmerising in music about love and despair alike...” *BBC Music Magazine*.

A dramatically persuasive and intensely musical interpreter, Randall is recognised for winning over audiences with his stunning vocal beauty, stylish singing, and charismatic stage presence. Randall’s second album on the Signum label,

*LOVESICK*, also received broad acclaim and was recorded in collaboration with GRAMMY® award-winning lutenist Stephen Stubbs. Randall returned to Germany in early 2023 to debut the role of Adone at Staatsoper Hamburg in the world premiere of Sciarrino's *Venere e Adone*. Upon receiving rave reviews for his singing and acting as the Refugee in *Flight* at Seattle Opera, Scotting performed again at Seattle Opera in late 2023 singing Ruggiero in Handel's *Alcina*.

## Martin Bakari, tenor



Praised by *Opera News* as a "vocally charismatic" performer with a "golden tenor," Martin Bakari's recent engagements include the title role in *Charlie Parker's Yardbird* (Atlanta Opera, Arizona Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Dayton Opera, New Orleans Opera, Indianapolis Opera), the tenor

soloist in *Carmina Burana* (Cecilia Chorus of NY at Carnegie Hall, Symphony San Jose, Lubbock Symphony), Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus* (Grant Park Music Festival), *Messiah* and the premiere of Paul Moravec's *A Nation of Others* (Oratorio Society of NY at Carnegie Hall), Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* (Virginia Opera, Kentucky Opera), Goro in *Madama Butterfly* (Dallas Opera, Opera Philadelphia, Utah Opera), Mime in *Das Rheingold* and Greene Evans in the premiere of *Jubilee* (Seattle Opera), Dr. Caius in *Falstaff* (Houston Grand Opera), Pong in *Turandot* (Opera Colorado), Don Basilio in *Le nozze di Figaro* (Seiji Ozawa Matsumoto Festival, Seattle Opera), *The Cartography Project* (Washington National Opera, The Kennedy Center), and a *United Kingdom* recital tour (Mirror Visions Ensemble).

Internationally, he has also appeared at major venues in Munich, Hamburg, Dresden, Frankfurt, Cologne, Tel Aviv, and Bari. His 2025-26 season includes all three tenor roles in performances and a commercial recording of *L'enfant et les sortilèges* (Barcelona Symphony Orchestra), Sportin' Life in *Porgy and Bess* (Dayton Opera), Goro in *Madama Butterfly* (Opera Colorado), Bill Watson and Lloyd the Bartender in *The Shining* (Nashville Opera), Zweiter Schäfer in *Daphne* (Seattle Opera), a song recital (Lyric Fest), and the tenor soloist in Laitman's *Vedem* (Music of Remembrance), *The Ordering of Moses* (The Syracuse Orchestra), and *Messiah* (Pacific Symphony, Boise Philharmonic). A 2018 George London Competition award winner, Bakari's recording of Grigory Smirnov's *Dowson Songs* (Naxos) was featured by *Opera News* as a "Critic's Choice" album. Bakari is an alumnus of the Juilliard School, Boston University, and the Tanglewood Music Center. [www.martinbakari.com](http://www.martinbakari.com)

## Jarrett Ott, baritone



In the 2023-24 season, Jarrett Ott performed the title role in Rameau's newly completed *Samson* with Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, the title role in Pascal Dusapin's *Macbeth Underworld* with Opéra Comique, Colonel Álvaro Gómez in Calixto Bieito's new production of Thomas Adès's *The*

*Exterminating Angel* with Opéra national de Paris, and Don Pedro de Alvarado in Purcell's *The Indian Queen* with Teodor Currentzis and the Salzburg Festival. In concert, he joined the Colorado Symphony and Oregon Bach Festival for Vaughan Williams' *A Sea Symphony*, the Philadelphia Orchestra for *Five Mystical Songs*, the U.S. Naval Academy for *Messiah*, and Symphoria for an evening of opera favorites.

Ott's recent operatic work includes Oreste in *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Opéra national de Paris), Dandini in *La Cenerentola* (Bayerische Staatsoper), Lescaut in *Manon* (Gran Teatre del Liceu), Aeneas in *Dido and Aeneas* (Grand Théâtre de Luxembourg), and Papageno in *Die Zauberflöte* (Opera Philadelphia). At Santa Fe Opera, he has appeared as Guglielmo in *Così fan tutte*, Harlekin in *Ariadne auf Naxos*, Maximilian in *Candide*, and Masetto in *Don Giovanni*. He has also performed Figaro (*Il barbiere di Siviglia*), Conte (*Le nozze di Figaro*), and Jupiter (*Orpheus in the Underworld*) with leading U.S. companies including Pittsburgh Opera, Lyric Opera Kansas City, New Orleans Opera, and Dayton Opera.

In concert, Ott has sung the title role in David Lang's *prisoner of the state* with Jaap van Zweden and the New York Philharmonic, Stephano in Sibelius' *The Tempest* with Susanna Mälkki, and *Weimar Nightfall: The Seven Deadly Sins* with Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He has performed *Carmina Burana* with the Seattle Symphony, Brahms' *Requiem* with the Columbus Symphony, and major works with the New York Choral Society at Carnegie Hall.

A native of Pen Argyl, Pennsylvania, Ott is based in New York and received his master's degree from the Curtis Institute of Music.

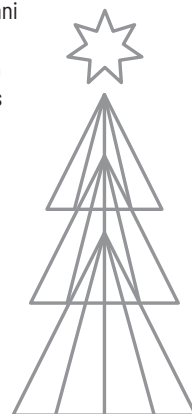
## Lori Loftus, harpsichord



Lori Loftus is the founding director of the Southern California Children's Chorus (SCCC), leading a faculty that serves young singers ages 5 to 18 in six choral levels. Under her leadership, SCCC has been recognized with three EMMY® Awards for its distinguished choral music education and performances on

prestigious stages, including Carnegie Hall and the Sydney Opera House. A frequent guest keyboardist with Pacific Symphony since 1976, Loftus performs regularly on the organ at Segerstrom Hall and harpsichord for annual performances of *Messiah* with the Pacific Chorale and Pacific Symphony.

In 2007, she received the Outstanding Alumni Award for Excellence in Choral Music from California State University, Fullerton, and in 2022, the Titan of Music Award from CSUF's School of Music. Beyond music, Loftus enjoys tournament golf, raising monarch butterflies, and traveling. She and her husband, John, have six grandchildren and two Siamese cats who bring her great joy.



# I ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

The GRAMMY® Award-winning Pacific Chorale, an Orange County “treasure” with a “fresh viewpoint” that “can sing anything you put in front of it with polish, poise and tonal splendor” (*Orange County Register*), has “risen to national prominence” (*Los Angeles Times*) since its inception in 1968. Hailed for delivering “thrilling entertainment” (*Voice of OC*), the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts is noted for its artistic innovation and commitment to expanding the choral repertoire.

It has given world, U.S., and West Coast premieres of more than 40 works, including numerous commissions, by such lauded composers as John Adams, Jake Heggie, James Hopkins, David Lang, Morten Lauridsen, Tarik O'Regan, Karen Thomas, Frank Ticheli, András Gábor Virág, and Eric Whitacre.

In addition to presenting its own concert series each season, Pacific Chorale, led by Artistic Director Robert Istad, enjoys a long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, with which the choir made its highly anticipated Carnegie Hall debut in 2018. The chorus also regularly appears with the LA Phil, with which it won the 2022 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance for its contribution to the live recording of “Mahler: Symphony No. 8, ‘Symphony of A Thousand,’” conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, featuring LA Phil, Los Angeles Children’s Chorus, Los Angeles Master Chorale, National Children’s Chorus, and Pacific Chorale. The choir has performed with such leading orchestras as the Boston Symphony, National Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber

Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Musica Angelica, among others. In addition to receiving national accolades, Pacific Chorale has garnered tremendous international acclaim.

In July 2023, the chorus completed its first international tour in seven years with appearances in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom in collaboration with Bath Philharmonia, Free State Orchestra of Bavaria, and Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra. Previous tours have taken the choir to 19 countries in Europe, South America, and Asia, including engagements with the London Symphony, Munich Symphony, L’Orchestre Lamoureux and L’Orchestre de St-Louis-en-Île of Paris, National Orchestra of Belgium, China National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Estonian National Symphony, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina, among others. Deeply committed to making choral music accessible to everyone, the organization has a discography of 14 self-produced recordings and an extensive collection of free digital offerings.

Recently, Pacific Chorale’s one hour choral-theatrical film *To the Hands* was featured as an Official Selection at the Newport Beach Film Festival. Pacific Chorale also places significant emphasis on choral music education, providing after-school vocal programs for elementary school students, a choral summer camp for high school students, and an annual community-wide singing event at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. [www.pacificchorale.org](http://www.pacificchorale.org)

Robert Istad / Artistic Director and Conductor  
*Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons Artistic Director Chair*  
Kibsaim Escárcega / Assistant Conductor  
*Ron Rudderow Legacy Chair*

Rhett M. Del Campo / President & CEO  
Alex Nelson / VP, Artistic Production & Operations  
Jung-A Lee / Guest Collaborative Pianist

## SOPRANO

Rebecca Hasquet  
*Section Leader*  
Alexandria Burdick  
Andria Nuñez Cabrera  
Chelsea Chaves  
Sophia Do  
Jenna Hansen  
Erika Jackson  
Saousan Jarjour  
Hannah Kim  
Kathryn Lillich  
Anne McClintic  
Maria Cristina Navarro  
Libby Quam  
Joslyn Sarshad  
Sarah L. Sweerman  
Victoria Wu

## ALTO

Jane Hyun-Jung Shim  
*Section Leader*  
Hannah Black  
Emily Border  
Denean R. Dyson 15  
I-Chin Betty Feinblatt  
Emma Ginzel  
Kathleen Thomsen Gremillion 10  
Eleen Hsu-Wentlandt  
Meadow Jones  
Kristen Kleinhans  
Logan Mintz-Hernandez  
Kathleen Preston 20  
Elizabeth Provencio  
Stephanie Shepson  
Grace Stewart  
Abby Tyree

## TENOR

Nicholas Preston  
*Section Leader*  
*Roger W. Johnson Memorial Chair*  
Jephte Acosta  
Mike Andrews  
Nate Brown  
Christopher Brush 10  
Chris Buttars  
David Evered  
Jason Francisco  
Alan Garcia  
Johnny Gonzales  
Steven M. Hoffman  
Craig S. Kistler  
Zachary Lindquist  
Sammy Salvador  
*Ron Gray Legacy Chair*  
Christiaan Westerkamp  
Yngwie Slassh Zamarippa

## BASS

Ryan Thomas Antal  
*Section Leader,*  
*Ron Gray Legacy Chair*  
Adam Daruvala  
Randall Gremillion  
Mark Hamilton  
Jared Hughes  
Matthew Kellaway  
Jonathan Krauss  
Dylan Leisure  
Kenneth Moore  
Ryan Morris  
Jason Pano  
Raphael Poon  
Ben Reyes  
Miles Rojo  
Malek Sammour  
Ian Schipper

Celebrating milestone years  
with Pacific Chorale this season.

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## LIBRETTO

### The Words selected from Holy Scripture by Charles Jennens

#### PART I

##### Sinfonia

###### Recitative (Tenor)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardon'd. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

(Isaiah 40:1-3)

###### Aria (Tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

(Isaiah 40:4)

###### Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed. And all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

(Isaiah 40:5)

###### Recitative (Bass-Baritone)

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth; the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come.

(Haggai 2:6-7)

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; ev'n the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(Malachi 3:1)

###### Aria (Countertenor)

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

(Malachi 3:2)

###### Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

(Malachi 3:3)

###### Recitative (Countertenor)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us."

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)

###### Aria (Countertenor) and Chorus

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

(Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 60:1)

###### Recitative (Bass-Baritone)

For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

(Isaiah 60:2-3)

###### Aria (Bass-Baritone)

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

(Isaiah 9:2)

###### Chorus

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace!

(Isaiah 9:6)

###### Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

###### Recitative (Soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

(Luke 2:8)

###### Recitative (Soprano)

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

(Luke 2:9)

###### Recitative (Soprano)

And the angel said unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

(Luke 2:10-11)

###### Recitative (Soprano)

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

(Luke 2:13)

###### Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill towards men.

(Luke 2:14)

###### Aria (Soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen. Rejoice greatly... da capo.

(Zechariah 9:9-10)

###### Recitative (Countertenor)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

(Isaiah 35:5-6)

###### Duet (Soprano and Countertenor)

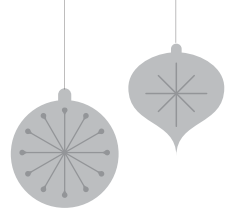
He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm; and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Come unto Him all ye that labour, come unto Him that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

(Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28-29)

###### Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

(Matthew 11:30)





**PART II**

**Chorus**

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.  
(John 1:29)

**Aria (Countertenor)**

He was despised, rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.  
(Isaiah 53:3)

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off His hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He was despised . . . da capo  
(Isaiah 53: 6)

**Chorus**

Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.  
(Isaiah 53:4-5)

**Chorus**

And with His stripes we are healed.  
(Isaiah 53:5)

**Chorus**

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.  
(Isaiah 53:6)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their Heads, saying:  
(Psalm 22:7)

**Chorus**

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.  
(Psalm 22:8)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness: He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.  
(Psalm 69:20)

**Aria (Tenor)**

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow!  
(Lamentations 1:12)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken.  
(Isaiah 53:8)

**Aria (Tenor)**

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.  
(Psalm 16:10)

**Chorus**

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.  
(Psalm 24:7-10)

**Aria (Bass-Baritone)**

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.  
(Psalm 2: 1-2)

**Chorus**

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.  
(Psalm 2: 3)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the Lord shall have them in derision.  
(Psalm 2:4)

**Aria (Tenor)**

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.  
(Psalm 2: 9)

**Chorus**

Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!  
(Revelation 19:6; 11:15; 19:16)

**PART III**

**Aria (Soprano)**

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth. And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.  
(Job 19:25-26; 1 Corinthians 15:20)

**Chorus**

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.  
(1 Corinthians 15:21-22)

**Recitative (Bass-Baritone)**

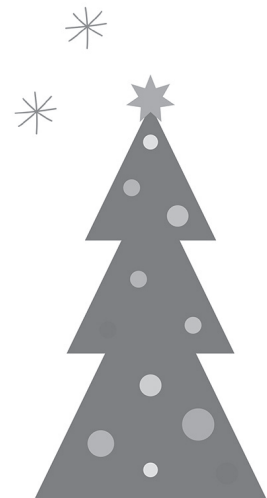
Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.  
(1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

**Aria (Bass-Baritone)**

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. The trumpet . . . da capo  
(1 Corinthians 15:52-53)

**Chorus**

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honour, glory and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.  
(Revelation 5:12-14)



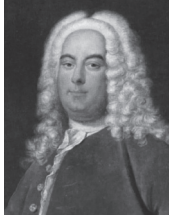
# PROGRAM NOTES

George Frideric Handel

**Born:** Feb. 23, 1685 in Halle, Germany

**Died:** Apr. 14, 1759 in London, England

## **Messiah, HWV 56**



**Composed:** Sept. 14, 1741

**Premiered:** Apr. 13, 1742 in Dublin, Ireland.

**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** Dec. 8, 2024, with Christopher Warren-Green conducting.

**Instrumentation:** Two oboes, two bassoons, two trumpets, timpani,

continuo, and strings, with soprano, countertenor, tenor, bass soloists, and chorus.

**Approximate duration:** 105 minutes

Although it was composed with a different time of year in mind, Handel's oratorio *Messiah* has become indelibly associated with yuletide, and more generally with winter. Of course, it is glorious all year round. But as winter enfolds us and the days darken, it becomes indispensable. Now is when our need for the beauty, joy and inspiration of Handel's music is greatest. That's why, though it was written as an Easter observance, *Messiah* has become a Christmas tradition.

Handel composed *Messiah* at a time when he was in need of a major success: He had enjoyed a hugely successful run writing and producing his own operas, but the public taste for his operas was fading. Having already written operas on sacred themes, he turned to the unstaged oratorio form. *Messiah* is the foremost example of what became known as the English oratorio, which combines religious texts with elements of intense drama, sometimes in ways hard to distinguish from opera. Most of them combine biblical and non-biblical texts, though *Messiah* is drawn entirely from the Bible.

*Messiah* was never envisioned to be enacted. It was completed within 24 days, a breakneck pace for so expansive a work; the text was provided by Charles Jennens, drawn mainly from the biblical books of Isaiah and the gospel of St. Matthew. According to some sources, the selection of texts reflected Jennens' and possibly even Handel's anti-establishment political leanings. After all, who but a radical egalitarian would so potently emphasize Isaiah's prophecy that "every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low?" Still, a message of straightforward religious inspiration was overriding for Handel and remains so for many of his listeners. There are many traditional accounts of seemingly divine inspiration as he worked. In one, his assistant walked into the room where he was composing after shouting to him for minutes on end with no response. He reportedly found Handel in tears, pen in hand, and asked what was wrong. "I thought I saw the face of God," Handel said.

The immediate popularity of Handel's *Messiah* made it an instant tradition in England and elsewhere, and annual performances gradually moved from Eastertide to the Christmas season. By 1784, *Messiah* performances at events such as the Handel Centenary Commemoration were commonplace, often drawing together huge choral and orchestral forces. As an impresario, Handel was accustomed to tailoring his works for specific performers and production circumstances, and various editions of *Messiah* existed even within his lifetime. He also expected soloists to interpolate vocal ornamentations as appropriate, a practice that reappeared during the bel canto revival that began during the 1960s and is often included in modern performances.

*Messiah* is an experience of beauty that is deeply participative. It opens with a stately symphonia with a pace like that of a slow, halting march. This sets a tone of solemn importance that frames even the most joyful passages to come. What follows is a full evening's worth of music in three sections. In all there are more than fifty separate numbers, typically choral songs alternating with solos for individual soprano, alto, tenor, or bass voice. Together they present a version of the Christian story of the messiah, or anointed one, from the annunciation and birth through the crucifixion and resurrection. Despite the commercial considerations that were never far from Handel's mind, *Messiah* is first and foremost an expression of faith. By combining majestic beauty and grandeur of scale with humble sincerity, *Messiah* has gained a household familiarity that is rare among classical compositions.

More so than Bach's rigidly structured oratorios, Handel's *Messiah* continues to exert a very real influence upon modern composers. Leonard Bernstein, Benjamin Britten, Andrew Lloyd Webber, and Paul McCartney are among the 20th-Century composers whose oratorios show how they learned from Handel's example. But the deepest and most lasting influence of *Messiah* is its continuing popularity with listeners like us, and the joy it continues to bring us every year.

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